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### Akin Queries Defense Secretary Gates on F-18 Super Hornets

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Todd Akin, Ranking Member of the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee, asked Secretary of Defense Robert Gates a series of questions about the Navy's looming lack of fighter aircraft at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee. Congressman Akin focused on the proposal to buy F/A-18 Super Hornets to fill this gap, which, if unaddressed, could leave as many as five out of eleven aircraft carriers with no fighters. [ *Watch the exchange here:* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWR30SZvGm0> ]

"Secretary Gates' answer was not sufficient. The Department of Defense, at the highest levels, needs to figure out how to address this Navy fighter gap. I intend to ask the Chief of Naval Operations about this issue Thursday when he is testifying. I also intend to hold a hearing in my subcommittee on this issue next week. The bottom line is that aircraft carriers are not very effective without aircraft to go on them," said Congressman Akin. "The F/A-18 Super Hornet is the only viable answer for the Navy's fighter shortfall. The Super Hornet is being built here in St. Louis and is a fantastic airplane at a great price. This Administration needs to buy more F-18's. They are the right thing for our national security and for the Navy. F-18's are also key to keeping defense jobs in St. Louis."

Akin's subcommittee, the Seapower and Expeditionary Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, will be holding a hearing on the Navy's fighter shortfall and other Navy aviation issues on Tuesday, May 19 at 3:00PM in room 2212 of the Rayburn House Office Building.